

Venture into the Past at Old Fort William

Leave the 20th Century at your car and embark on an adventure into the past. Whether you choose to ride to the Fort by horse-drawn wagon or to take a five minute walk along our nature trail, the sensation of stepping into the past is there.

At the Fort's main gate, pause for a moment and enjoy the sight before you — the massive palisade, the buildings, the activity. But don't pause too long. Old Fort William is not just spectacular. It's ten acres of action, fun, and adventure.

In the native encampment, witness rare Ojibwa arts such as cedar bark weaving; on the opposite side of the Fort, in the winterers' encampment, lend an ear to voyageur songs and tales.

And between these two encampments, explore the functioning community of the North West Company which, during the Great Rendezvous, often numbered two thousand people. Fort William was a pot pourri of social classes, from Indians of various tribes to French Canadian voyageurs to Scottish partners and clerks. As with any mixed society, you will discover that Old Fort William reflects a multitude of lifestyles and cultures.

History lives throughout Old Fort William. Meetings of the Company partners are reenacted. Canoes arrive and depart. Fur packs are weighed, graded, and stored. The labours of the Rendezvous continue from morning until early evening.

You'll find skilled tradesmen performing ancient crafts — barrel making, canoe building, gunsmithing, shipbuilding, tinsmithing, carpentry, and blacksmithing. You may even be invited to try your hand at stitching a birch bark canoe or pumping the bellows of a forge.

Or joining in a lively jig to the tune of the fiddle or the pipes. You'll find the spirit of the Great Rendezvous comes as naturally as breathing.

For the children, Old Fort William's historic farm is particularly fascinating. Some of our animals (a farm hand will show you which ones) love to be touched.

The sensory joys of Old Fort William do not stop at seeing, touching, and listening. In the "Cantine Salope", our historic restaurant, treat your tastebuds to a slice of bread fresh from a brick oven. Or try a bowl of thick pea soup. Or a delectable dessert. The choices are varied and delicious.

For the recreational visitor, the student, and the specialist alike, a visit to Old Fort William is a delightful adventure. Our well informed staff takes pride in answering any questions you may have. And if they don't know the answer, they'll find it for you.

Enjoy your visit to Old Fort William . . . and hurry back!

Have a GREAT Rendezvous at Old Fort William.



Rendezvous



Information . . .

Dates and Times
Open in 1978 May 20th - October 1st, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily. Program reduced each year after Labour Day. Opening and closing dates vary slightly from year to year.

Admission Fees

Adults	\$2.00	Children (6-12)	\$.50
Students	\$1.00	Children under 6 years	Free
Family	\$5.00	Special rates for reserved groups	

Travel agents recognized

NOTE: ADMISSION FEES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

Transportation
Cruise ship and city bus service to and from the Fort.

Location
Old Fort William is situated in Thunder Bay South, off Broadway Avenue. From Trans-Canada Highway 11-17 West, turn right onto the 25th Sideroad, then left onto Broadway Avenue. From 11-17 East, turn onto Highway 61, go past airport, then right onto Broadway Avenue. From Highway 61 South, drive north of the junction of 61 and 61B and turn left onto Broadway Avenue.

Facilities
19th Century restaurant (in historic area) and modern refreshment stand (in Visitors' Information area). Wheelchairs and strollers (upon request) and ramps for handicapped. Horse and wagon service to historic area. Guided or self-conducted tours.

Special Events
Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Annual Great Rendezvous Pageant first Sunday in July. Dominion Day Celebrations July 1st.

For Additional Information, Group Reservations, etc.
Write to: "INFORMATION"
Old Fort William
Vickers Heights Post Office
THUNDER BAY, Ontario
P0T 2Z9

or telephone: (807) 577-8461



Ministry of Culture and Recreation

Robert Johnston
Deputy Minister

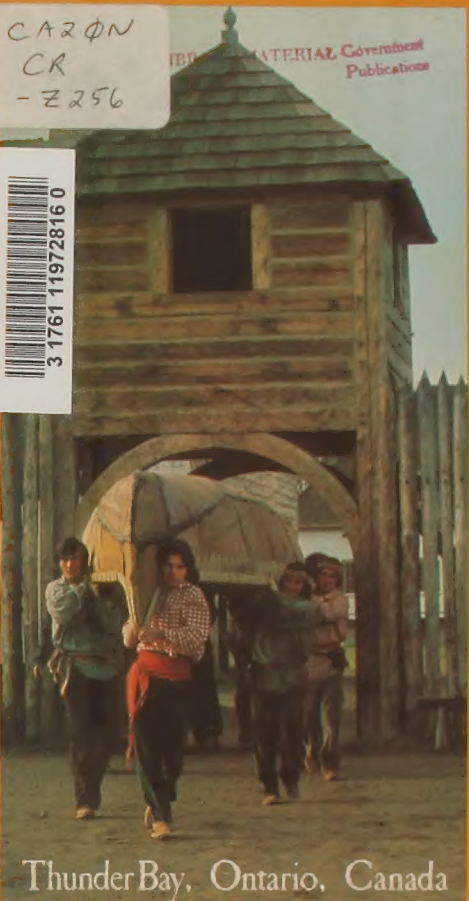
Hon. Robert Welch
Minister



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Old Fort William

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Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada

The rugged men of the fur trade trail-blazed North America, pushing into vast, uncharted wilderness, seeking after rich pelts, they created the foundation upon which Canada is built.

Trading in furs in the early 19th Century was big business; and the North West Company, despite intense and sometimes violent competition, had gained most of the trade. American independence and the imposition of customs duties forced the abandonment of the Company's original base at Grand Portage in what is now Minnesota.

In 1803, a new fort on British soil became the inland headquarters for the Company's far-flung commercial empire, which extended to the Arctic and eventually the Pacific Ocean.

Located at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River on Lake Superior, Fort William was built by the Company's partners as the major depot and transshipment point where trade goods from London and Montreal were exchanged for furs obtained from Indians in the far reaches of the continent.

For three seasons, Fort William knew tranquility as a fur trade post. But each summer, it sprang to life as a thousand or more Nor'Westers converged by canoe, bateau, and schooner for the hectic transactions, serious meetings, and noisy celebrations of the Great Rendezvous.

Today, you can be part of the boisterous era of the fur trade, as the Great Rendezvous is recreated some nine miles from its original site on the wooded banks of the Kaministiquia River — the old voyageur route to the west.

The Great Rendezvous 1803-1821



Rendezvous

Old Fort William